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Firka Devel

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## [Despatch Abstract.]

I.A.S. Probationers - Visit to Provincial Headquarters - Programme of training - arrangement - Firka Development Department - [illegible] on Rural Reconstruction work in the selected firkas and centres - Papers [illegible]

## FIRKA DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### A Talk on Rural Reconstruction work in selected firkas and centres.

It is a well-known fact that for nearly a century and a half, the village economy, which is the backbone of the country's life, has been sorely neglected. The Government were convinced, especially in view of the difficult food situation, that food production and village reconstruction were the two pressing problems of the day which required immediate attention. They therefore decided to launch a programme of Rural Reconstruction work in selected firkas and centres.

Prior to the launching of the Rural Reconstruction Scheme in the selected firkas and centres, the Government had had under consideration, the question of Rural Development in this Province. Various measures had been taken from time to time for the improvement of Rural conditions. But as the efforts had been restricted in scope and lacked proper coordination the results were neither tangible nor enduring The lack of direction, support and encouragement from a Central authority has deprived many of the benefits that would otherwise have acrued. It was obvious that planning, organising and supervising the execution of schemes of Rural reconstruction should be centralized as also the coordination of the work of the Departments of the Agriculture, Industrie Irrigation, Veterinary, etc in regard to such schemes.

This is the background with which this Government started their said scheme. To start with it has been the intention of this Government to make each selected firka or centre self-sufficient in the matter of food and clothing and other necessities of life. It has also been decided to revive or develop as the case may be and to pay special attention to improve village industries essential for the life of the village communities. The Government have also launched a scheme for fostering khadi.

I would now give you an idea of how the firkas were selected what the machinery set up for carrying out the scheme is and what works are attempted in these firkas and centres and why.

The Government started intensive work in small selected areas with a view to gradually extending it throughout the Province. A firka is a convenient unit. Firkas where some work had already been done in model villages or where there were some non-official agencies already at work, or where there was manifest enthusiasm which could be put to some constructive use were selected first.

The selection of the firkas was also based on considerations of general backwardness of the firka in regard to communications, Sanitation, Lighting, Water supply, etc; presence of electric installation in or within the easy reach of the firka or centre; the presence of available conditions for intensifying the production of hand-loom cloth and for the development of other cottage industries.

The Collector of the District has been placed in direct charge and is primarily responsible for the successful working of the Rural Reconstruction Scheme in his district. Each selected firka is in charge of a Firka Development Officer of the rank of a Deputy Tahsildar and under him there are Village Development Officers of the rank of Revenue Inspectors, one for each of the 4 or 5 groups into which each firka or centre has been divided. The necessary subordinate staff have also been provided for.

A Provincial Firka Development Officer of the status of a Head of a Department has been appointed to be in direct provincial charge of the Government's scheme of Rural Reconstruction Khadi and Cottage Industries in the selected areas. He is generally concerned

with the technical aspect of the scheme and is responsible for its proper coordination and execution. The Provincial Firka Development Officer is at present assisted by Regional Firka Development Officers in the executive side of things. That is all about the machinery set up for working the scheme.

The work in the various firkas and centres commenced with the conduct of exhaustive village surveys in respect of the villages included in the firkas and centres. The village surveys referred to above were in the nature of assessing the present condition of the villages and the villagers and their urgent needs. The enquiry was conducted by the Firka Development staff in consultation with and with the assistance of the villagers, village committees, etc. A questionnaire was prepared for the guidance of the Firka Development Officers. Information on all the points indicated in that questionnaire was obtained by the Firka Development staff in the course of their survey of each village in their respective firkas. Surveys were conducted under the general supervision of the Revenue Department.

During the course of the survey and in the light of the information collected, the Firka Development Officers drew up a list of the needs of each village in consultation with the important personnel of the village. The following needs are illustrative of the list:-

1. Water supply.
2. Irrigation.
3. Communications.
4. Education.
5. Agricultural Improvements;
6. Cattle.
7. Sanitation.
8. Medical Aid.
9. Veterinary Aid.
10. Co-operative Institutions.
11. Production of Cloth.
12. Other Village Industries.

In pursuance of the surveys conducted and the list of needs drawn up, complete coordinated plans of development for each firka or centre have been prepared. The various needs of the villages have been arranged in order of relative urgency keeping in mind the limitations of finance, personnel and equipment.

With a view to obtaining tangible and immediate results, the Government have given first preference for improvements under "Communications" and "Rural Water Supply". I may incidentally mention that the paramount need for laying out roads in the villages in the selected areas cannot too strongly be stressed. Due to lack of funds and proper assessment of the rural needs this has suffered neglect in the past. In pursuance of the policy to improve rural conditions, the Government have come up with proposals to make improvements in Village Communications and Rural Water Supply in the selected areas. A good road properly maintained represents substantial savings in the loss of carts or wheels or cattle through accidents and the like. This would mean substantial additions to the Rural Economy. It is the duty of the Government to see that the drain by way of loss of cattle and carts and damage to them which is not an inconsiderable proportion of the income of the villagers, is avoided. It is under these circumstances that the Government have decided to make improvements to village communications in the selected areas. It is for this purpose that a sum of Rs. 50,000 has been sanctioned for expenditure in respect of each firka or centre.

It has been said that the health of a people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and all their powers as a state depend. The situation in the villages in regard to protected water supply upon which the health of the people so much depends, is indeed lamentable. Safe drinking water has been a rarity to the villagers. According to an authority quoted by the Bhore Committee (approved by the Government of India in 1943) the minimum Criteria for any village to be called 'a sanitated village' are:-

1. Water supply protected from surface contamination;

to be undertaken irrespective of other common measures. They are an integration of several small measures. I may instance in this connection a few examples, such as cutting down of hedges, filling up of pits, widening or improving of small foot-paths or cart tracts, construction of small culverts over petty channels or drains, putting up of masonry basement and other objects which are calculated to promote public well-being and contentment. The Collectors of the districts have been instructed to attend to such improvements. The Government have also undertaken intensive sanitation work with the aid of the Firka Development staff in each selected firka or centre. Detailed instructions for a programme of sanitation work in villages inside the selected firkas have been issued. The District Health Officials have been instructed to give the necessary aid in this connection. Certain discretionary grants have been placed at the disposal of the Collectors for financing small schemes, calculated to improve the conditions of the rural folk and make them more happy and prosperous.

A Provincial Firka Development Board to formulate and frame schemes of rural reconstruction has been constituted. The Board consists of officials and non-officials. This Board first met on 19.10.1947. The Sub Committee of experts appointed by the Board comprising among others Dr. J.C. Kumarappa and Sri. G. Ramachandran has drawn up an overall plan of Rural Reconstruction scheme, the object of which is to organise the villager for a happier, more prosperous and fuller life in which the individual villagers will have the opportunity to develop both as an individual and as unit of a well-integrated society. The plan is being considered by Government. Firka Development Committees to implement the scheme of Rural Reconstruction have also been constituted in each firka or centre. The Committee are generally composed of officials and influential non-officials.

In order to give effect to their proposals in regard to Rural Reconstruction Schemes, the Government have constituted a special fund and have transferred a sum of Rs. 4/- crores to this fund from revenue account. Out of this sum of Rs. 4 crores, one crore has been set apart for Harijan uplift and the remaining three crores are being used for financing general schemes of Rural Reconstruction including the scheme for Khadi Production and Cottage Industries. As and when specific schemes of Rural Uplift are ready, the sums of money necessary for implementing them are being drawn from this fund and the unspent balance will be available for expenditure in future years.

I may say without any hesitation that the Rural Reconstruction programme constitutes an integral part of national reconstruction. It is the tiller of the soil on whom the economic structure of the country eventually rests. It is he who gives the nation its food and supplies their raw material. It is on the produce of his husbandry that the country's balance of foreign trade largely depends. It is therefore essential that his needs must be attended to without delay. It is in recognition of these principles that this Government have launched their scheme. They are confident that ere long with the co-operation, enthusiasm and aptitude of the public, they will be able to show tangible results in the matter.

## A Talk on Cottage Industries.

No plan for the development of cottage industries on a Province-wide basis has as yet been formulated although a survey of the Cottage industries in this Province was made as early as in 1927 and many suggestions were made by the Special Officer who conducted the survey. The artisans in this Province are found to be working on traditional lines and their skill is largely inherited and not cultivated. Any scheme which aims at improving their skill so that they may be enabled to use up-to-date methods of manufacture in the production of articles has to

2. Drains for the removal of waster water; and
3. regular removal of filth and refuse outside the village to a place prepared for their reception.

It would therefore follow that the provision of a safe water supply should receive the highest possible priorit priority from the administration responsible for the welfare of its people. To attemp at digging more wells under sanitary conditions for drinking water purposes is therefore, I may say, to attempt at doing something fundamental and necessary. It is in pursuance of this that the Government have undertaken to dig more drinking water wells in the selected firkas and centres. It is hoped that as a result thereof the water-borne diseases formerly so rife will become negligible.

As a vital and fundamental part of their comprehensive plans for the development of village economy, the Government have decided that high priority should be given to the electrification of the firkas and centres selected for intensive Rural Reconstructi work. Supply of electric power to these areas is receiving high priority cottage industries and t thereby facilitating modernisatio of existing Cottage Industries and introduction of new ones. The Government have also undertaken in this connection that wherever the minimum load that is required is not obtainable either in Government areas or in the Licensee areas and there is a consequent deficit in the revenues according to departmental standard, these deficits arising out of unremunerative electrification schemes of firkas and centres selected for intensive rural reconstruction work should be subsidised. In other words the Government have decided not to insis that specific returns on capital outlay according to departmental standards should be obtained before the areas in question are electrified. It may be that the return according to departmental standards is below the mark. But it will be observed that there is an invisible return that will occur in the long run due to the electrification of these areas. These invisible returns will ultimately more than compensate the loss that theGovernment will be suffering at present. This will certainly improve the taxable capacity of the villagers which will result in substantial additions in course of time to the Provincial revenues.

Necessary instructions have been issued by the Department of Agriculture to build up a model agricultural village in every district under theFirka Development scheme, to accelerate the pace of adoption of improved agricultural methods. Efforts would be made, as far as possible, to select a village which is by the roadside and where there was preferably a weekly 'shandy'. The mode illage would be made self-sufficient in fodder, fuel, manure, etc. and work in this direction is to commence from July 1, 1948. Every acre of land should be utilised for the cultivation of that for which the village is best suited, and there would be a definite plan for raising green manures in wet lands, for raising shrubs, quick growing trees and fodder crops, to facilitate the adoption of improved methods in respect of all crops. Arrangements would also be made to tackle posts and diseases on modern lines.

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The Director of Agriculture has informed the officers to see that sufficient enthusiasm was infused into the ryots, to make them take to good husbandry.

The opening of night schools, day schools and Hindi classes have also been attended to by the Firka Development staff. The Co-operative movement in the firkas is proceeding at a rapid pace by the efforts of the Firka Development staff.

Apart from these, there are several items of work peculiar to particular areas, without which Rural Reconstruction in those localities would not be complete. These items of work should have

reckon with the following four factors:-

(i) want of capital (ii) indebtedness, (iii) stiff competition from machine-made articles which tend to bring deterioration in the quality of the articles with a view to make it cheap and (iv) above all lack of patronage from the public who seem to have a cultivated taste for foreign articles only. Various measures taken by the Government so far to overcome these retarding factors have not met with any appreciable success due apathy of the artisans themselves.

In this background Government have been more or less compelled to develop cottage industries on a systematic basis only in selected places. Government took on hand from December 1946 a scheme to develop cottage industries in 25 places, known as "firkas" chosen to implement their programme of Intensive Rural Reconstruction scheme so that village economy can be rebuilt on a self-sufficient basis. In the light of the experience gained in the course of a year the intention of the Government at present is to concentrate on the following six basic industries only, namely, blacksmithy, woodwork, pottery, Tanning and Leather-goods manufacture, sheet metal work and light metal casting. As the demand for these products will be universal, it is felt that these industries can ultimately be developed on intensive lines on province-wide basis.

Government consider that the chief object of the cottage industries scheme should be to secure the production by improved methods of everyday requirements of the locality and of certain special articles made with traditional or special skill, the training of a few would be artisans in the villages being incidental or really auxiliary to actual production. It has also been suggested to Government that the Cottage industries are best developed by forming Co-operative Societies, Limited concerns and Partnerships in the villages themselves so that people living there may take a vital interest in the development of the Cottage industries, Government providing them with tools, appliances free of cost or at reduced cost and assisting such units in the procurement of raw materials and will technical assistance and in marketing their products. Government propose to stipulate Units in return for all the help which they will provide them to admit four students as apprentices in the unit. After watching the progress of this approach to the problem for about a year, Government will decide the future line of action.

Apart from this, Government are also running a coir training school at Beypore (West Coast) for giving training in improved methods of manufacturing coir articles and they have now amalgamated with the School the coir centre till now run at Calicut for the supply of coir goods to civilians. Government are also opening training centre in the East Coast in Vizagapatam district (Uddanam tract) to teach the members of fishermen community improved methods of coir industry. With the introduction of Prohibition scheme it is expected that coconut trees will yield a rich harvest of fibre and Government are alive to the great possibilities of the development of this industry.

Government are at present running a training centre at Kalahasti in Chittoor district to teach the art of manufacturing glass bangles and beads.

This Government have also opened a pottery training centre at Rajahmundry in East Godavari district in 1945 with a view to train local potters the manufacture of stone-ware and of fine eartherware articles. Government are making experiments in the School of Arts and Crafts with a view to ascertain the suitability of clays in Ceded Districts and in East Coast districts for tile manufacturing.

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## INTENSIVE KHADI SCHEME.

This Government have taken on hand the development of khadi as an integral part of the comprehensive plan to make villages in the Province as far as possible self-sufficient working units, from the end of December 1946. The scheme consists of two parts, viz., Intensive and Extensive. The intensive part aims at the idea of self-sufficiency, in clothing in terms of khadi and is being worked out in seven compact places known as centres, viz., Avanashi, Vellakoil, Puliankurichi in Tamil nad, Kotauratla, Guruvareddipalem and Yerragondapalem in Andhra Desa and Payyanur in the West Gocast, where the All India Spinners' Association has already done substantial work for the development of khadi. The scheme is being implemented with the assistance and technical advice of the All India Spinners' Association and the centres are manned by the trained workers of All India Spinners' Association.

2. The main features of the scheme may be described as follows:-

(a) Every family in the centre is to be induced to equip itself with at least one charka and contribute at least one efficient spinner, Government arranging for the supply of wooden and iron parts for charkas at cost price and also for the supply of cotton at cost price. The yarn spun in each village should as far as possible be woven into cloth by weavers residing therein, every endeavour being made to increas the weaving capacity of the village.

(b) The spinners are to be encouraged to get the yarn spun by them woven into cloth for the consumption of the family, an inducement being given to them by Government in shape of a small subsidy at a flat rate of ~~%~~ 4 annas per yard to cover a portion of their weaving charges.

(c) All surplus yarn not utilsed for the spinners' families is to be purchased by Government got woven into cloth and made available to persons residing in the centre at a price representing the cost of production plus the overhead charges.

(d) Arrangements are to be made by Government for giving instruction to spinners and weavers who requires such instructions.

(e) As Government have been aware that a good deal of propaganda would be necessary toinculcate the habit of self-reliance, as the idea of self-spinning is nothing else, they had made provision in the scheme for the constitution of Centres and Village Khadi Committees charged with the duty of doing house to house propaganda to create enthusiasm and necessary atmosphere for the Khadi scheme. These Committees are to consist ~~%~~ of non-officials who are picked khadi enthusiasts.

3. Till now 36 Sub centres under the seven main centres have been opened.

4. The Provincial Textile Commissioner, exercises the necessary financial and administrative supervision in respect of the entire scheme. The local branch secretaries of the All India Spinners Association have been appointed as Honorary Regional Khadi Officers in their respective regions. No honorarium will be paid to these officers but each will bepaid actual travelling allowance upto a maximum of Rs. 100/- per mensem. A centre Khadi Officer who will attend to the day-to-day administration of the centre under the instruction of the Honorary Regional Khadi Officer and with necessary subordinate staff, has been appointed for each centre. The entire field personnel has been drafted from the All India Spinners' Association and the members are drawing only the pay and allowances admissible in that organisation....

5. The actual expenditure during 1947-48 comes to

Rs. 14,49,137/- of which the expenditure spent on items like purchase of implements, cotton, yarn, ginning, carding and slivering charges, etc are in the nature of investments only. The net expenditure to the Government will be the amount that was spent on payment of subsidy, establishment charges, training courses and publicity.

6. With a view to develop khadi on sound lines, the activities of uncertified khadi dealers were eliminated from the seven intensive khadi centres, their belt areas of ten miles and from the production centres of All India Spinners' Association at Kanagala (Guntur district) and Tirupur (Coimbatore district). At one time it was though that by virtue of the powers vested with the Provincial Textile Commissioner he could take steps to stop the distribution of mill cloth and mill yarn issued to handlooms in the intensive khadi centres and the Provincial Textile Commissioner was actually engaged in working out the details as to how best competition from mill made cloth etc could be eliminated. But with the removal of controls over textiles, it is no longer possible for the Provincial Textile Commissioner or form the Government to effectively check the distribution of mill cloth or mill yarn anywhere in the Province. Government however, hope to make the people of the area khadi mined by launching an intensive propaganda.

7. The extensive part of the scheme to be implemented in the 27 firkas selected for Rural Reconstruction Scheme, will be so designed as to pave the way by creating a proper atmosphere for the extension of the intensive part of the scheme to new areas. Details of the scheme are being worked out.

8. Government have also decided that khadi should be used for all State purposes as it will have a unifying influence and be the best expression of this Government's homage to Mahatma Gandhi. They have therefore directed that all the officers of the Government in the Police, Jail, Medical and other department who have been enjoyed to use uniforms should use khadi for the purpose and similarly the requirements of all the department for cloth like curtains, towels, table-cloth, etc. should be met from khadi. Steps are being taken to augment the production of khadi to meet the demands of the various consuming department

G. Gopalakrishna Naidu,
7.5.

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/True copy/

Office Assistant,
Madras Record Office.

k.y.s.

FIRKA DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

This file deals with the preparation, printing, etc of the talk on Rural Reconstruction work in the selected firkas and centres for the use of the Indian Administrative Service probationers. The printed copies of the talk have been received and the I.A.S. probationers have also visited this Department. The Superintendent, Government Press was requested to keep the matter standing until further instructions to enable to print additional copies urgently, if necessary. Submitted in this connection that sufficient number of spare copies of the talk are available. It is therefore for orders whether no additional copies need be printed. It is also for orders whether the Superintendent, Government Press may now be informed that the type may be released. Subject to orders a draft Memorandum is submitted for approval.

Submitted also that no further action is necessary in this file. For orders whether the papers may be recorded as G.O. Ms. after issue of the draft Memorandum to the Superintendent, Government Press.

G.G.
30.6.

G.O. Ms. No. 422 dated 5.7.1948.

I.A.S. - Probationers - Visit to provincial headquarters - Programme of training arrangement - Firka Development Department - Talk on Rural Reconstruction work in the selected firkas and centres Papers recorded.

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/True copy/

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k.y.s.

No. 14/6/12